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THE LORD
DIGBIES
SPEECH

IN
THE HOUSE OF
COMMONS.

To the Bill of Attainder, of the
Earle of STRAFFORD, the 21
of APRIL, 1641.



Printed in the Yeare, 1641.

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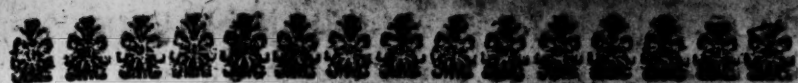
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THE
LORD DIGBYES

Speech in the House of

Commons, to the Bill of

Attainder of the Earle of

Strafford, the 21. Aprill.

1641.

Master Speaker,

WE are now upon the point of giving (as much as in us lies) the finall Sentence unto death or life, on a great Minister of State and Peere of this Kingdome, *Thomas Earle of Strafford*; a name of hatred in the present age by his Practices, and fit to be made a terror to future ages by his punishment.

I have had the honour to be imployed by the House in this great businesse, frō the first houres that it was taken into consideration: it was a matter of great trust, (and I will say with confidence) that I have served the House in it with industry, according to my ability, but with most exact faithfulness and secrecy.

And as I have hitherto discharged my duty to this House and to my Country, in the progresse of this great Cause; so I trust I shall doe now

in the last period of it, to God and to a good conscience.

I doe with the peace of that unto my selfe, and the blessings of *Almighty God* to me and my posterity, according as my judgement on the life of this man, shall be consonant with my heart, and the best of my understanding in all integrity.

I know well Master Speaker, that by some things I have said of late, whilest this Bill was in agitation, I have raised some prejudices upon me in the cause.

Yea some (I thanke them for the plaine dealing) have bin so free as to tell me, that I suffered much by the backwardnesse I have shewne in this Bill of *Attainder* of the Earle of *Strafford*, against whom I had bin formerly so keene, so active.

Mr. Speaker, I beg of you and the rest but a suspension of judgement concerning me, till I have opened my heart unto you freely and clearly in this businesse.

Truely Sir, I am still the same in my opinions and affections, as unto the Earle of *Strafford*, I confidently beleeeve him the most dangerous Minister, the most insupportable to free Subjects that can be character'd.

I beleeeve his practises in themselves as high, as tyrannicall, as any Subject ever ventured on, and the malignity of them hugely aggravated by those rare abilities of his, whereof God hath given him the use, but the Devill the application. *In a word*, I beleeeve him still that grand *Apostate* to the *Commonwealth*,

wealth, who must not expect to be pardoned it in this world, till he be dispatch'd to the other. And yet let me tell you Mr. Speaker, my hand must not be to that dispatch. I protest as my Conscience stands informed, I had rather it were off.

Let mee unfold unto you the Mystery, Master Speaker.

I will not dwell much upon justifying unto you my seeming variance at this time from what I was formerly, by putting you in mind of the difference betweene Prosecutors and Judges.

How misbecomming that fervor would be in a *Judge*, which perhaps was commendable in a *Prosecutor*. *Judges* we are now, and must put on another Personage.

Is is honest and Noble, to be earnest in order to the discovery of Truth, but when that hath beene brought as farre as it can to light, our judgement thereupon ought to be calme and cautious.

In prosecution upon probable grounds, we are accountable onely for our industry or remisnesse, but in judgement, we are deeply responsable to God Almighty, for its rectitude or obliquity. In cases of life, the *Judge* is Gods Steward of the parties bloud, and must give a strict account for every droppe.

But as I told you Master Speaker, I will not insist long upon this ground of difference in mee now, from what I was formerly.

The truth on't is, Sir, the same ground whereupon I (with the rest of the five, to whom you you first committed the consideration of my Lord of *Strafford*) brought downe our opinion, that it was fit he should be accused of Treason, upon the same ground I was ingaged with earnestnesse in his prosecution, and had the same ground remained in that force of beliefe with me, which till very lately it did, I should not have beene tender in his condemnation. But truly Sir, to deale plainly with you, that ground of our accusation, that spurre to our prosecution, and that which should be the basis of my judgments, of the Earle of *Strafford*, as unto Treason, is to my understanding quite vanisht away:

This it was, *Master Speaker*.

His advising the King to employ the Army of *Ireland*, to reduce *England*.

This I was assured would be proved, before I gave my consent to his accusation. I was confirmed in the same beliefe, during the prosecution, and fortified in it most of all since Sir *Henry Vaines* preparatory examinations, by the assurances which that worthy member Mr. *Pymme* gave me, that his Testimony would be made convincing by some notes of what passed at the *Junto* concurrent with it, which I ever understanding to be of some other Counsellour, you see now prove but a Copie of the same Secretaries notes, discover'd and produc'd in the manner
you

you have heard, and those, *such disjointed fragments of the venomous part of discourses, no results, no conclusions of Counsels, which are the onely things that Secretaries should register, there being no use at all of the other, but to accuse and to bring men into danger.*

But Sir, this is not that which overthrowes the evidence with me, concerning the *Army of Ireland*; nor yet that all the rest of the *Junto* upon their oathes remember nothing of it.

But this Sir, which I shall tell you, is that which workes with me under favour, to an utter overthrow of his evidence, as unto that of the *Army of Ireland*: Before, whilst I was a prosecutor, and under tie of Secrecy, I might not discover any weakenesse of the cause which now as a Judge I must. Master Secretary was examined thrice upon Oath, at the preparatory Committee.

The first time he was questioned to all the *Interrogatories*, and to that part of the seventh which concernes the *Army of Ireland*, hee said positively in these words, *I can not charge him with that. But for the rest, he desires time to recollect himselfe, which was granted him.*

Some dayes after, he was examined a second time, and then deposes these words concerning the Kings being absolved from rules of government, and so forth very clearely. *But being prest to that part, concerning the Irish Army, againe can say nothing to that.*

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Here we thought what had done with him, till divers weekes after, my Lord of Northumberland and all others of the *Junto*, denying to have heard any thing concerning those words of reducing *England* by the *Irish* Army, it was thought fit to examine the Secretary once more, and then he deposes these words, to have beene said by the Earle of *Strafford* to his Majesty: *you have an Army in Ireland, which you may employ here to reduce, (or some word to that sence) this Kingdome.*

Mr. *Speaker*, these are the circumstances which I confesse with my Conscience, thrust quite out of doores that grand Article of our charge, concerning his desperate advice to the King, of employing the *Irish* Army here.

Let not this I beseech you, be driven to an aspersion upon Master Secretary, as if he should have sworne otherwise then hee knew or beleev'd, he is too worthy to doe that; onely let thus much be infer'd from it, that hee who twice upon oath with time of recollection, could not remember any thing of such a businesse, might well a third time misremember somewhat:
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Newcastle will not be set right againe for one hundred thousand Pounds; besides the over-price of Coales, which all the while it hath, and will cost this Citie, and other parts of the Kingdom. A great deale more of this nature might be rehearsed, but I delight not to presse such tenter-stretched arguments. Let us on both sides, rather thanke God, by proceeding in the way he hath laid before us, and not wadding in our way to ours. Time and his Blessing will repaire all our implicit Dammages, with many prosperous explicite Advantages.

They say that they doe not make any formall Demand; But they doe make a summe to appeare five hundred and fourteene thousand Pounds, more then ever we gave the King at once. A portentous Apparition! which shews it selfe in a very dry time, when the Kings Revenue is totally exhausted, his Debts excessively multiplyed, the Kingdome generally impoverished, by grievous Burdens, and disordered Courses: All this supply is to be drawn out of us onely, without the least helpe from any of his Majesties other Dominions: which to my seeming will be an utter graining of the People; unlesse England bee *Puteus inexhaustus*, as the Popes were wont to call it.

Notwithstanding Sir, now that I have in part opened the state we are in, though nothing so exactly as they have done theirs: I shall most willingly and heartily affoord the Scots whatsoever is just, Equitable and Honourable, even to a convenient, considerable round summe of Money towards their losses

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and Expences, That we may goe off with a friendly and a handsome loos. If they reject it, we shall improve our Cause.

It was never yet thought *Mr. Speaker*, any great wisdom over-much, to trust a succesfull Sword. A man that walkes upon a rising ground, the further he goes, the larger is his Prospect. Successe enlarges mens desires, it tends their ambition, it breeds thoughts in them they never thought before: This is naturall and usuall.

But the Scots being truly touched with Religion according to their Profession, that onely is able to make them keep their Word: for Religion is stronger and wiser then Reason, or Reason of State.

Beyond all this, *Mr. Speaker*, the remarkable Traces of Gods wonderfull Providence in this strange Work, are so many, so apparant, as I cannot but hope almost to beleefe: That the same all-governing mercifull hand, will conduct and leade us to a happie Conclusion, will Contract a closer, firmer Union between the two Nations, then any meere humane Policie could ever have effected: which inestimable Benefits to both, in advancing the truth of Religion, in exalting the greatnesse of the King, in securing the peace of his Kingdomes, against all Malicious, Envious, Ambitious Opposites, to Religion, to the King, to his Kingdomes; wherein I presume, all our Desires and Prayers doe meet.



ANOTHER
SPEECH
OF
Sr. BENJAMIN RVDYER
in the High Court of
PARLIAMENT.

Mr. SPEAKER,

I Do verily beleve, that there are many of the Clergy in our Church, who do think the simplicity of the Gospel, too meane a vocation for to them serve in: They must have a specious, pompous, sumptuous Religion, with additionalls of Temporall greatnesse, Authority, Negotiation: Notwithstanding, they all know beter then I, what *Fathers*, Schoolemen, Councells are against their mixing themselves in secular affaires.

This Romane Ambition will at length bring in the Romane Religion, and at last a haughty Insolence even against supream
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power it selfe, if it be not timely and wisely prevented.

• They have amongst them an Apothegm of their own making, which is, *No Mitre, No Scepter*, when we know by deare experience that if the Mitre be once in danger, they care not to throw the Scepter after, to confound the whole Kingdome for their Interest.

And Histories will tell us, that whensoever the Clergie went high, Monarchy still went lower: If they could not make the Monarch the head of their own Faction, they would be sure to make him lesse: witnesse one example for all, The Popes working the Emperour out of *Italy*.

• Some of ours, as soone as they are Bishops, *adepto sine, cessant Motus*, They will Preach no longer, their Office then is to governe. But in my opinion they governe worse then they Preach, though they Preach not at all; for we see to what passe their government hath brought us.

In conformitie to themselves, They silence others also, though *Hierom* in one of his Epistles saith, that even a Bishop, let him be of never so blamelesse a life, yet he doth more hurt by his licence, then he can do good by his example.

Mr. Speaker, It now behooves us, to re-
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straine the Bishops to the duties of their Function, as they may never-more hancker-after heterogeneous extravagant employments: Not be so absolute, so single and solitary in actions of Moment, as Excommunication, Absolution, Ordination, and the like: but to joyne some of the Ministry with them, and further to regulate them according to the usage of Ancient Churches, in the best times, that by a well-temper'd Government, they may not have power hereafter, to corrupt the Church, to undoe the Kingdom.

When they are thus circumscrib'd, and the Publique secur'd from their Eruptions, then shall not I grudge them a liberall plentifull subsistence: else I am sure, they can never be given to Hospitality.

Although the calling of the Clergy be all glorious within, yet if they have not a large, considerable, outward support, they cannot be freed from vulgar Contempt.

It will alwaies be fit, that the flourishing of the Church, should hold proportion with the flourishing of the common-wealth wherein it is. If we dwell in Houses of Cedar, why should they dwell in skins? And I hope, I shall never see a good Bishop left worse then a Parson without a Gleab.

Certainelie Sir, this superintendencie of eminent Men, Bishops over divers Churches,
is

is the most Primitive, the most spreading, the most lasting Government of the Church. Wherefore whilest we are earnest to take away Innovations, let us beware we bring not in the greatest Innovation that ever was in *England*.

I doe very well know, what very many doe very fervently desire. But let us well bethink our selves whether a popular Democraticall Government of the Church (though fit for other places) wilbe either suitable or acceptable, to a Regall, Monarchicall Government of the State.

Every man can say (It is so common and known a Truth) that sodain and great changes both in naturall and Politique bodies have dangerous operations: and give me leave to say, that we cannot presently see to the end of such a consequence, especially in so great a Kingdom as this, and where Episcopacie is so wrap'd and involv'd in the Laws of it.

Wherefore Mr. *Speaker*, my humble Motion is, that we may punish the present offenders, reduce and preserve the Calling for better men hereafter. Let us remember with fresh thankfullnesse to *God*, those glorious Martyr-Bishops who were burn'd for our Religion, in the times of Popery, who by their learning, zeale, and constancie, upheld and conveyed it down to us.

We

We have some good Bishops still, who doe
Preach every Lords Day, and are therefore
worthy of double Honour; they have suffer'd
enough already in the Disease: I shalbe sorry
wee should make them suffer more in the
Remedy.

FINIS.
